



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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DEQ releases report on air-monitoring orders

BATON ROUGE -- A report released today shows that the air monitoring efforts from a special project in 2005-06 provided environmental officials and industry with valuable information. The report and summary are available at the Department of Environmental Quality's web site, www.deq.louisiana.gov.

The effort was initiated by DEQ's Administrative Orders on Consent that required 15 Baton Rouge-area companies to install fence-line monitoring systems. The orders came about because DEQ data showed that emissions of highly reactive volatile organic compounds were contributing to ozone formation in the five-parish nonattainment area. HRVOCs play a vital role in forming ozone, which is an air pollutant that has caused the area to be listed as marginal for the eight-hour ozone standard by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"This project was important for the department and the public so we could see if HRVOC emissions were playing a role in the ozone spikes we had noticed at the state's air-monitoring sites," said Maurice Oubre, the DEQ engineer who studied the data and wrote the report. "The program had a significant positive impact on both the number of strikes at the DEQ monitors and on the number and severity of HRVOC releases being reported to the department."

Oubre added that the project showed that "fence-line monitoring can assist company operations personnel with finding and controlling emissions leaks."

During the monitoring period, the number of strikes at the ten LDEQ-operated monitoring sites showed a significant decline of 25 percent. Strikes at the four urban Baton Rouge monitoring sites declined by 40 percent. Also, reports to DEQ of unauthorized releases of HRVOC greater than 100 pounds in 24 hours showed a decrease of 60 percent, and the release quantities were much lower. This improved performance helped the Baton Rouge area to attain the old 1-hour ozone standard in 2006.

"The goal of the administrative orders was to learn about the HRVOC releases in the ozone-impacted area," said DEQ Secretary Mike McDaniel. "I think this report clearly shows that the department gained a lot of valuable information that we can use in our efforts to improve air quality."

The companies that received the AOC were: BASF, Chemtura, Dow, DSM, Enterprise, ExxonMobil Chemical, ExxonMobil Plastics, ExxonMobil Polyolefins, ExxonMobil Refinery, Placid, Plantation Pipeline, Occidental, Shell, Syngenta, and Williams Olefins.

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